

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing this important piece of legislation, S. 796, the Protecting Moms Who Served Act of 2021, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in strong support of the bipartisan legislation, Protecting Moms Who Served Act.

But before I do, I want to thank Congresswoman LAUREN UNDERWOOD for her leadership on this bill. I would also like to thank Senator DUCKWORTH and Representatives JULIA BROWNLEY, GUS BILIRAKIS, and BRIAN FITZPATRICK for their co-leadership.

Together, Congresswoman UNDERWOOD and I are the co-founders and co-chairs of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, as well as lead sponsors of the Omnibus—comprehensive legislation that addresses every dimension of the maternal health crisis in the United States.

And it gives me great joy to say that the Protecting Moms Who Served Act will be the first bill of the Omnibus to pass in Congress.

The United States continues to have the highest maternal mortality rates in the developed world. Women and birthing people of color die during or after pregnancy at 3 to 4 times the rates of their White counterparts.

For the nearly 2 million women Veterans, maternal health outcomes are not any better. Pregnant and postpartum women who served face unique maternal health risks that deserve our attention.

For example, the risk of pregnancy complications may be higher for women Veterans receiving maternity care through Veterans Affairs, since these women frequently have multiple medical conditions that can increase pregnancy complications.

Furthermore, it is suggested that military deployment may increase the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. A post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis can increase the risk of spontaneous pre-term birth, preeclampsia, or gestational diabetes.

Women Veterans with more symptoms of PTSD or moral injury like shame, guilt, or demoralization, are also at greater risk for postpartum depression in the three years following the end of their military service.

More specifically a study on the impacts of PTSD or moral injury, found that one in two women Veterans who became pregnant during the study, had a negative pregnancy outcome.

These outcomes include postpartum depression or anxiety, miscarriage, obstetrical medical conditions, emergency c-sections, the baby's need for intensive care post-delivery, preterm birth, stillbirth, and ectopic or tubal pregnancy.

Our women Veterans have upheld their duty to serve and protect and, we as Members of Congress must do the same.

The Protecting Moms Who Served Act will codify and strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs maternity care coordination programs to ensure Veterans receive the high-quality maternal health care and support they have earned.

This is a noteworthy advancement since maternity care coordination programs are associated with improved maternal and birth outcomes, increased use of beneficial health services, and decreased costs, especially among women with chronic or pregnancy-related physical or mental health conditions, or social vulnerabilities.

Additionally, this bill will commission the first-ever comprehensive study of America's maternal health crisis among women Veterans, with a particular emphasis on racial and ethnic disparities.

This study is needed to provide further understanding of the maternal health challenges experienced among women who served.

On May 12th, this legislation passed the house with unanimous bipartisan support.

Today, we are here to vote once more and finally send this bill to the President's desk, changing the lives of millions of women Veterans and their children.

Let's remember that strong and supportive healthcare for birthing people supports the future of our Nation by investing in the well-being of children and families.

And today's vote ensures a healthcare system for women Veterans that will offer the best maternal care available.

I am proud to see our progress towards ending maternal mortality and disparities among our moms who served. I look forward to continuing to address these issues in Congress as we examine and discuss the maternal mortality and morbidity issues that threaten our Nation.

To all my colleagues—lets pass the Protecting Moms Who Served Act for our women Veterans, their children, and their families.

What we do here today will live beyond our time in Congress and impact generations of women who serve.

It is time we make sure that Veterans, who have done so much for our country, receive the support and resources they need.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 796.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

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STUDENT VETERANS COUNSELING CENTERS ELIGIBILITY ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4233) to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish Vet Center readjustment counseling and related mental health services to veterans and members of the Armed Forces using certain educational assistance benefits.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4233

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act".

SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF VET CENTER SERVICES.

(a) VETERANS AND MEMBERS USING EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS.—Section 1712A of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "clauses (i) through (vi)" both places it appears and inserting "clauses (i) through (vii)";

(2) by striking "in clause (vii)" both places it appears and inserting "in clause (viii)";

(3) in subsection (a)(1)(C)—

(A) by redesignating clause (vii) as clause (viii); and

(B) by inserting after clause (vi) the following new clause:

"(vii) Any veteran or member of the Armed Forces pursuing a course of education using covered educational assistance benefits."; and

(4) in subsection (h), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(6) The term 'covered educational assistance benefits' means educational assistance benefits provided pursuant to—

"(A) chapters 30, 31, 32, or 33 of this title;

"(B) chapters 1606 or 1607 of title 10;

"(C) section 116 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note); or

"(D) section 8006 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note prec.)."

(b) GAO REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report assessing—

(1) the mental health needs of veterans pursuing a course of education using covered educational assistance benefits (as defined in section 1712A(h)(6) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)); and

(2) the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs to address such mental health needs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4233.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4233, the Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act from Congressman MURPHY.

We all know that student veterans may face challenges as they begin this new phase of their lives following military service, and we want them to be able to seek and find support at vet centers.

We also encourage VA to continue monitoring the need for increased funding, staffing, and resources for vet centers as a result of demand for these services.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 4233, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4233, the Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act.

This bill would allow student veterans to access readjustment counseling and peer support services at vet centers.

Student veterans have unique needs and stressors. This bill would help them get the support they require to thrive in school and in their post-military lives.

I am grateful to my good friend and committee colleague, Dr. GREG MURPHY, for introducing this bill. I thank him for his leadership on behalf of student veterans, and I am confident this bill would benefit them for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge every one of my colleagues to support H.R. 4233 today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 4233, the Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act.

The issue to which I will speak is exceedingly personal to me and my district, as I represent close to 90,000 veterans, most of whom are or will be receiving benefits via the Post-9/11 GI Bill or the Montgomery GI Bill.

The transition from Active Duty to civilian life can be challenging for some of our servicemembers. It can be tremendously difficult for many of our servicemembers to return to education after sacrificing so much for our Nation abroad. This is especially true for older and nontraditional student veterans.

A few months ago, alongside Ranking Member BOST, I had the privilege of introducing the Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act. It passed out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee with a unanimous vote.

Our Nation's veterans represent the very best among us here in the United States, but many serve at great personal cost. A recent RAND study reported that 20 percent of veterans on the GI Bill experience feelings of depression or PTSD. That 20 percent amounts to over 170,000 veterans, which is almost double the number I mentioned previously of the veterans I represent in my district.

As one can imagine, serving as a member of our Armed Forces can be extremely stressful. Too often, we see the tragedy of our veterans losing their battle with mental health issues when returning from service. A very tragic and somber fact is that the VA currently estimates 18 veterans a day commit suicide. In fact, 46 percent of our military students report suicidal thoughts compared to only 6 percent of their nonmilitary peers.

If we can provide mental health services to assist just a single veteran who is struggling, then I believe it is our sworn duty to do so. We have the opportunity now with the Student Vet-

erans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act.

Education poses one of the most beneficial yet stressful areas of transition for our veterans. The intention of this bill is to aid more of our veterans who are readjusting to civilian lives while providing overdue access to vital mental health resources.

Helping veterans succeed in their education and civilian lives is one of the most important ways we can thank them for their service.

I have spoken with some of these student veterans. I have heard their stories. These student veterans have had to wait weeks to even months for a mental health appointment if their mental health crisis was not deemed urgent. Unfortunately, many of our veterans do not have the luxury of weeks or months to wait to see a mental health provider.

Furthermore, private mental health can be inaccessible for those not utilizing the benefits of the GI Bill. An average therapy session could cost between \$60 to \$120, with the higher end reaching over \$250 per session. Even with health insurance, premiums often can be \$50 per session.

The Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act would provide expanded counseling and mental health services to those student veterans through the VA's Readjustment Counseling Centers, known as vet centers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely honored and proud to sponsor this bill, and I am grateful to Ranking Member BOST for his support as an original cosponsor and to all of my Republican and Democratic colleagues who have come together to support this very critical bipartisan legislation.

I am also thankful to the Student Veterans of America for their support.

I ask all Members for bipartisan support.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4233, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4233.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

BRINGING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS TO VETERANS EDUCATION ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 147) to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to transitional services for separating members of the Armed Forces and educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 147

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Bringing Registered Apprenticeships to Veterans Education Act" or the "BRAVE Act".

SEC. 2. EDUCATION FOR SEPARATING MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES REGARDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS.

Section 1144(b)(1) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by inserting "(including apprenticeship programs registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (50 Stat. 664; commonly referred to as the 'National Apprenticeship Act') and approved under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38)" after "employment opportunities".

SEC. 3. WEBSITES REGARDING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.

(a) WEBSITE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SECRETARY OF LABOR.—The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training, in coordination with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall establish a user-friendly website (or update an existing website) that is available to the public on which veterans can find information about apprenticeship programs registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (50 Stat. 664; commonly referred to as the "National Apprenticeship Act") and approved under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code. Such information shall be searchable and sortable by occupation and location, and include, with regard to each such program, the following:

- (1) A description, including any cost to a veteran.
- (2) Contact information.
- (3) Whether the program has been endorsed by a veterans service organization or nonprofit organization that caters to veterans.
- (4) Whether the program prefers to hire veterans.
- (5) Each certification or degree an individual earns by completing the program.

(b) COORDINATION WITH OTHER WEBSITE.—The Assistant Secretary shall update all information regarding programs for veterans listed on apprenticeship.gov (or any successor website) to include the information specified under subsection (a).

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.